

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 FRB-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-02 AID-05 CIEP-02 SS-15 STR-04 ITC-01

TRSE-00 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 OMB-01 FEA-01 /096 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7462

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: EAGR NP

SUBJ: RICE HARVEST ESTIMATE FOR 1976/77

1. PRELIMINARY, NOT-YET-ANNOUNCED ESTIMATES BY THE GON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR THE AGRICULTURAL YEAR COMING TO A CLOSE (CONSISTING FOR RICE OF ESSENTIALLY THE LATE SUMMER AND WINTER HARVESTS IN 1976) PREDICT A DECLINE IN PADDY PRODUCTION OF 5 TO 7 PERCENT FROM THREE PREVIOUS YEAR'S RECORD CROP OF 2,605 THOUSAND METRIC TONS. THE DECLINE IS ATTRIBUTED TO WEATHER CONDITIONS LESS IDEAL THAN THOSE WHICH RESULTED IN THE 1976/76 RECORD. ANOTHER CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IS THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN SOME REDUCTION IN PLANTINGS DUE TO THE STEEP DROP IN INDIAN PRICES LAST YEAR.

2. ALTHOUGH IT WILL OBVIOUSLY HAVE A DEPRESSING EFFECT ON OVERALL ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE, THE DECLINE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE CRITICAL IN TERMS OF DOMESTIC FOOD SUPPLY. SUBSTANTIAL CARRYOVER STOCKS ARE IN HAND, AND THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN THE SURPLUS AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT TO INDIA. NEVERTHELESS THIS RESULT ONCE AGAIN UNDERLINES THE PRECARIOUS NATURE OF NEPAL'S RED QUEEN'S RACE

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BETWEEN AGRICULTURE AND POPULATION GROWTH. THE IMPLIED REDUCTION OF SOME 94 THOUSAND METRIC TONS IN TERMS OF MILLED RICE COMPARES WITH 1975/76 TOTAL OFFICIAL RICE EXPORTS OF 163 THOUSAND MT. CONSUMPTION/EXPORT DYNAMICS ARE NOT SO SIMPLE THAT A CORRESPONDING LINEAR DECLINE IN ACTUAL EXPORTS THIS YEAR CAN BE ASSUMED; BUT THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT EXPORT EARNINGS WILL BE SERIOUSLY AFFECTED. EVEN MORE

DISTURBING IS THE FACT THAT LAST YEAR'S WEATHER COULD BE NO
MEANS BE CONSIDERED AS BELOW AVERAGE. YET TO BE FELT WITHIN
THE NEXT FEW YEARS ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE INEVITABLE BELOW-
AVERAGE PHASE IN THE MONSOONAL CYCLE.
MAYTAG

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